

**(Washington D.C.)** - Today Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA-03) joined Representatives Chris Van Hollen (D-MD-08), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD-01) and Tom Davis (R-VA-11) to introduce legislation that would dramatically boost federal funding for Chesapeake Bay restoration. Together, the four members co-chair the Congressional Chesapeake Bay Watershed Taskforce.

"The Chesapeake Bay is an incredibly complex ecosystem. Unfortunately, we learned the hard way that one use of the Bay cannot be at the expense of another. The only way we are going to restore the Bay is to clean up each and every one of its rivers and tributaries," said Rep. Scott. "This legislation is a tremendous step in the right direction."

The timing of the legislation is particularly appropriate. This year Congress will reauthorize the farm bill, which provides federal support for agricultural programs and producers throughout the United States. "The reauthorization of the Farm Bill creates a rare opportunity to address runoff from agricultural lands, which is one of the most significant challenges facing the Bay, " commented Rep. Scott. "Nearly half of the nutrient pollution in the Bay comes from agriculture. Thousands of farmers in the watershed have implemented conservation practices, and we know they are willing to do more, but they need financial and technical assistance. This bill is our commitment to help them."

The legislation, entitled the "Chesapeake's Healthy and Environmentally Sound Stewardship of Energy and Agriculture Act of 2007" and nicknamed CHESSEA, would have a major impact on the water quality in all six of the Chesapeake Bay watershed states. If enacted, CHESSEA would bring significant new federal technical and financial assistance to farmers and landowners in the Bay watershed states to help them in their efforts to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff. It would also provide incentives for the region's farmers to produce new sources of renewable energy that will simultaneously improve water quality and reduce the impact of fossil fuel consumption on the atmosphere.

In addition, the bill would add Virginia to the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program, which is a voluntary program for agricultural producers that provides technical assistance and cost share funds to address natural resource concerns such as water conservation and quality and soil erosion. Currently, Virginia is the only Chesapeake Bay watershed state not included in the AMA program. "I hope that the inclusion of Virginia in this program will bring additional assistance and support to agricultural producers throughout the Commonwealth," remarked Rep. Scott

The legislation is supported by the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Chesapeake Bay

Program. Additional cosponsors include: Albert Wynn (D-MD), John P. Sarbanes (D-MD), Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Jo Ann S. Davis (R-VA), Frank Wolf (R-VA), Jim Moran (D-VA), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) ), Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Thelma Drake (R-VA), and Maurice Hinchey (D-NY).

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